Railway Company, for the purpose of giving them away to settlers. It is all very well to say, as Mr. Greenway does, that these lands should never have been given to the railway company. The objection comes too late to be of any use, and it would never have been of any value unless accompanied by some substitutes. We doubt very much whether the country would agree to buy these lands; but to talk of buying them to give away seems almost like a bad joke. Another thing Mr. Greenway would like: that until Manitoba is filled up, settlements should not go further west. This is a matter beyond control, if free choice is to be left to settlers; if not, they may elect to keep away. The financial operation of buying the railway company's lands would involve a fatal re-adjustment of the subsidy question.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

Some features of the dry goods business as conducted now-a-days in Canada, were given to us rather graphically by a merchant, this week. Said he: "The Canadian importer and wholesale dealer is badly handicapped to-day by the policy of various old country houses, whose representatives so overrun the land, selling to retail dealers, as to leave him practically only Canadian woolens and cottons to deal in—and they are cold comfort, as far as profit goes." Being asked to explain a little in detail what was meant, the merchant went on to illustrate: "Now here," he said, "in Toronto and other cities, we have resident agents for Manchester, Bradford, London and Glasgow houses. The old country agent does not represent a house which 'sells everything.' He is a specialist now. One man will sell you carpets, if you are a retailer in good standing. His neighbor offers you hosiery. Another deals in linens, and whether his wares are made in Belfast or in Fifeshire or in Forfarshire, he can show great variety, and give easy terms. Then there are Nottingham laces or Coventry laces represented by a fourth man, and silks by a fifth man. Bradford goods and Leeds products have each their representative, and so have other branches of a dry good man's stock. These are the people that a traveller for a Canadian importing house has to buck up against, and I tell you they make his life a burden."

As for the inducements held out to the Canadian retailer to import direct, we are informed that small parcels are offered him if he will not buy large ones. He can get a dress length of silk if he will not buy a piece. And if a tailor in an interior town does not care to buy a web of cloth, it will be cut in half, or in quarter for him. Cases are cited in which even suit lengths are shipped, or enough for one or two pairs of trousers. This is "wholesale importing" with a vengeance.

Does the Canadian retailer know what his goods cost him by the time he has added freight, insurance, commission and what not, to the invoice price of his goods? Many persons do not discriminate between the jobber in Britain and the manufacturer there. Our retailers buy from the agents of jobbers, who have to pay a profit to the manufacturer. The Canadian importer also buys from the manufacturer, and ought to be able to sell quite as cheaply as the Glasgow or London house. Let us suppose that the Canadian wholesale importer were out of existence, what would the country retailer do then? Would he depend upon his Manchester friends to send him five yards of velvet for Mrs. Smith's cape, as a Toronto house might do, or upon a Bradford house to save him a suit length of tweed for Mr. Jones, as his Montreal dry goods friends had often done. Nay, he would find himself squeezed between the old country jobber and the Canadian departmental store, for if he could not get for his customer what she wanted, she would resort to Morgan's or Eaton's.

Another feature which makes the role of the wholesale importer difficult is, that the department store is a direct importer, and when it does a business of from half-a-million to three millions of dollars a year, as some concerns in Canada do, it is easy to see that this must reduce the volume of wholesale importing trade. But this, we believe, is not so much felt, certainly is not so much resented, as the dealing of small Canadian retailers direct with old country houses.

THE WHEAT SITUATION.

For several years the markets abroad have not permitted a profitable export trade in Ontario wheat. Manitoba wheat has been shipped to Great Britain each year in large quantities, but the Ontario wheat grower has sent his supplies exclusively to the home market. During the present week sales of about 20,000 bushels of Ontario red winter wheat for export have been reported in Toronto, and, it is said, additional orders for as large a quantity have been received. Merchants have purchased supplies for export at about 81 cents outside the city. Shipments are made by way of St. John, N.B. and Portland, Maine.

Deliveries from farmers' hands are restricted at present, although the cold weather, and an improved condition of the roads in a number of districts, are bringing out more liberal supplies. It appears to be the general opinion in the country that prices will advance after the holidays. Farmers are talking "dollar wheat," and the statistical position of the markets appears to warrant the opinion that prices will advance. Ontario winter wheat is now quoted at 80 to 85 cents, as compared with quotations of 62 to 67 cents a year ago. In February this year Ontario wheat advanced to 84 cents equal to 17 cents per bushel. A similar advance on the present quotations would place the best grade of Ontario winter wheat at $1.02 per bushel. But the course of the market is uncertain. It is estimated that 50 per cent. of last year's crop yet remains in the hands of farmers.

In Liverpool and Chicago the markets are being subjected to the manipulation of speculators, and although a good deal of legitimate trading is being done, speculative influences are prominent. From Argentina reports of bad weather continue to be received, but the damages to the Argentina wheat crop have already been discounted, and the stories fail to affect the markets. Free arrivals from Russia and the Danube have exerted a weakening influence upon European markets, while recent rains in India have somewhat relieved the distress of famine there, and demands from this quarter are less urgent.

PUNISHING SWINDLING MERCHANTS.

A case comes to our knowledge this week in which a retailer accepts delivery of goods from a wholesale house on credit on the same day that he consults a lawyer with the idea of making an assignment. The house wishes to have him punished, but grudges to expend, single-handed, $100 or $200 for the purpose. Not long since, a Queen street grocer named Hamilton, who got into financial difficulty, assigned—in fact, was prosecuted by a Toronto firm whom he had deceived with respect to his financial position, and was properly sent to prison for three months for the fraud. But it cost the wholesale house $150 to convict him, this outlay being additional to the loss made by crediting him, for his assignee has never returned a cent to creditors out of his estate. Still a third case is the recent one of Bradley, Clarke & Co., of which our readers have heard, presenting a curiously intricate series of untruths and swindles whereby goods were obtained on credit and applied to the furnishing